PHI 815-22: History of the Integration of Religion and Society

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Professor

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Assignment #3 – Essay

1. Write a 5-page essay that analyzes the following items:

a. Introduction of the Present Issue: Begin with a contemporary social issue that

has a (probably unappreciated) history of positive Judeo-Christian response to it.

b. Body Sections:

i. Biblical Worldview Perspective: Locate the issue in the progress of

Biblical revelation and explain the foundations of a Judeo-Christian

perspective. What is a biblical/theological position on this issue based on

sound biblical interpretation?

ii. History of the Issue: Trace the development of the selected issue

alongside the history of Christianity's social impact on it. Summarize the

historical trend at different points in history with an eye to identifying

significant causes of the social problem, identifiable processes at work,

and enduring patterns that emerged. How did the problem/issue originate

and develop? What were the causes of the social problem? What

identifiable sociological or theological processes were at work? What

enduring patterns emerged that recur?

iii. Exemplars of Religion and Society Integration: Present a specific

example (e.g. key leader(s) or movement(s) of socially and intellectually

active Christians) of religion and society integration. If known, discuss

how God raised up the leader or movement.

iv. Applicable Principles: Distill the timeless principles of truth or leadership

**Dr. Ward Feedback:**

**Introduction:** The thesis statement is distributed across these two sentences. See if this sounds tighter:

Judeo-Christian ideas for tackling the problem of homelessness emerge from biblical perspectives, from the history of the problem, and from inspirational leaders and movements that integrated religion and society to provide solutions. These ideas are still relevant for modern methods of social integration, even within military leadership environments.

**Biblical Worldview Perspective:** Your Biblical Worldview Perspective is a nicely structured example of theological reasoning that begins and ends with humanity's dignity and value as made in God's image. The Biblical Worldview Perspective section ends with an incomplete sentence. Try this:

“A theological response to homelessness is grounded on the idea of mankind as imago Dei—bearing God's image. Therefore, biblical commands to care for people in need build on the ideas of love for neighbor, hospitality, and social justice.”

**History of the Issue :** You do a nice job summarizing the historical development of homelessness and how its forms changed with the development of western civilization as well as how the church ministered to the homeless. In the History of the Issue you wrote, “In the ancient world, the main factors contributing to homelessness included but not limited to war, hunger, and social displacement.” You can address the ancient world period by using and citing Schmidt’s How Christianity Changed the World (2004) CHARTS in the Course Resources. Note the Chart The Development and Maintenance of Christian Charity and Compassion.

**Exemplars of Religion and Society Integration:** You provided a perfect Exemplar with, “One notable Christian leader who combined faith and society in response to homelessness is co-founder of the Catholic Worker Movement, Dorothy Day.” You wrote, “Her legacy inspires modern Christian involvement with homelessness as the Catholic Worker homes remain a paradigm of faith-based communal service.” This is a great contextualization of an exemplar informing Christian action today to integrate religion and society.

**Applicable Principles:** These are wonderful principles drawn from a Christian historical perspective informed by Scripture, church history, and contemporary relevance. The basis of divinely created inherent human dignity, the biblical call to hospitality to the stranger, and systemic advocacy and engagement with working organizations that help the homeless are all wonderfully actionable principles for integrating religion and society in addressing the problem of homelessness with compassionate and practical solutions. Willam Booth who started the Salvation Army is another good historical exemplar and the Salvation Army is still a vital ministry to the homeless. Finally, I assumed homeless veterans were where you were going with this topic as soon as you first mentioned military applications. You finished the Applicable Principles with a perfect contextualization to your professional sphere, “Emphasizing the dignity and value of every person, supporting programs that assist homeless veterans, and pushing for institutional solutions to solve homelessness within military communities can help military leaders to model servant leadership (Burt, 2001).”

**Conclusion:** You did a great essay summary in your conclusion with an inspiring close: “These realizations provide military commanders with useful ideas for compassionate service and servant leadership. Inspired by the lengthy history of Christian involvement with social concerns and the continuing Biblical command to love and serve others, this study has strengthened my personal feeling of responsibility to be an agent of change in the world.”

**Homelessness: A Judeo-Christian Perspective and Historical Impact**

Often linked with rising poverty, mental illness, and social inequality, the modern societal problem of homelessness is a catastrophe of increasing importance globally. Though most people see homelessness as a contemporary social issue, Christian response to it has lengthy history based on the Judeo-Christian principles of compassion, hospitality, and disadvantaged care. Christian groups have interacted with the homeless throughout history, providing spiritual and practical assistance as well as from a biblical perspective, homelessness may be addressed and the intrinsic dignity of every human being as created in the image of God promoted. Judeo-Christian ideas will be argued in this article to provide long-standing ideas for combining religion and society in tackling homelessness. Examining the biblical perspective, the historical evolution of the problem, and inspirational leaders or movements will help this study to show ideas that are still relevant for modern methods of social integration, even within military leadership environments.

**Biblical Worldview Perspective**

From a biblical perspective, the issue of homelessness can be traced in the theological conception of humanity's dignity and value as made in God's image (Genesis 1:27, New International Version). The Judeo-Christian tradition stresses caring for the poor, the stranger, and the underprivileged in both the Old and New Testament, therefore laying the groundwork for a sympathetic reaction to homelessness. God orders Israel under the Mosaic Law to treat the stranger, the orphan, and the widow (Deuteronomy 10:18–19, 24:17–22) kindly and generously. The prophets' appeal to justice emphasizes this notion especially in Isaiah's plea to "loose the chains of justice" and "provide the poor wanderer with shelter" (Isaiah 58:6–7, New International Version).

Through the teachings of Jesus and through his acts of sympathy towards the homeless, the New Testament carries on this ethic of compassion. According to Matthew 25:35–40, Jesus says that deeds of compassion for the "least of these" amount to direct service to Him. Early churches showed this ethic by sharing resources to help the less fortunate (Acts 4:32–35). From a biblical standpoint, therefore, a theological reading of homelessness depends on the ideas of love for neighbor, hospitality, and social justice. Grounded on the idea of mankind as imago Dei—bearing God's image—and the biblical commandment to care for people in need this compassion (Gibson & Hornsby, 2020).

**History of the Issue**

Though it has always been a problem, the reasons and expressions of homelessness have changed with time. In the ancient world, the main factors contributing to homelessness included but not limited to war, hunger, and social displacement. But as industry and urbanization increased during the 18th and 19th centuries, homelessness became closely associated with poverty, unemployment, and insufficient social support networks. Throughout the Middle Ages, the Christian Church was essential in providing for the homeless through monastic hospitals and charity organizations. These were often related to the Church's perspective of almsgiving as a way of spiritual salvation and fulfilling the obligation to care for the poor (Brown, 1987).

As Western industrialized countries developed and economic inequalities worsened in the 19th century, the social issue of homelessness became increasingly obvious. Founded by William and Catherine Booth, Christian organizations such as the Salvation Army arose in reaction to the filth and poverty of metropolitan settings (Winston, 2000). Combining evangelism with social service, these groups fed, housed, and spiritually cared for those experiencing homelessness. With changes in public policy, housing markets, and mental health treatment, the reasons for homelessness changed even more throughout the 20th century (Burt, 2001). Christian theology inspired social groups like the Catholic Worker Movement headed by Dorothy Day. The movement kept tackling the institutional causes of homelessness and promoting justice and human dignity (Allaire, 2019).

There were many clear mechanisms that helped homelessness become a societal issue. Constant drivers have been economic disparities, urbanization, and the collapse of social safety nets (Koegel et al., 1995). Theologically, the loss of Christian influence in public life and the growing secularism of social services might have undermined society's moral responsibility to care for the homeless (Cloke et al., 2010). Still, Christian participation with the problem has followed trends from early Church charity to contemporary Christian-based campaigning.

**Exemplars of Religion and Society Integration**

One notable Christian leader who combined faith and society in response to homelessness is co-founder of the Catholic Worker Movement, Dorothy Day. Day, born in 1897, was a radical social crusader and devoted Catholic who merged her religion with a dedication to social justice, especially for the impoverished and homeless (Forest, 2011). She created homes of hospitality where the homeless may receive food, fellowship, and refuge via the Catholic Worker Movement. Day's attitude to homelessness was profoundly shaped by her Christian religion, especially the lessons of Christ about compassion, poverty, and justice.

As Day attempted to fulfill the Gospel's mandate to serve the underprivileged, her life and work show how religion and society may coexist. She thought Christians were invited to live in solidarity with the impoverished as much as to help them (Allaire, 2019). Day established a place where the homeless were treated with dignity as fellow human beings via the Catholic Worker Movement, not just serviced. Her legacy inspires modern Christian involvement with homelessness as the Catholic Worker homes remain a paradigm of faith-based communal service (Forest, 2011).

**Applicable Principles**

From the scriptural perspective, historical instances, and the life of Dorothy Day, some ageless ideas may be extracted. First, Christian interaction with homelessness is based mostly on the human dignity concept. All persons are entitled to respect, care, and compassion as they are formed in the image of God (Gibson & Hornsby, 2020). This idea cuts across historical and cultural settings to provide a basis for tackling homelessness now. Second, both Old and New Testament repeat the biblical requirement to exercise hospitality—opening one's house and resources to the stranger—Deuteronomy 10:18–19; Hebrews 13:2. This idea forces Christians to see the homeless not as "others" but as neighbors worthy of care (Cloke et al., 2010).

Third, Christian social participation ought to include systematic advocacy as well as instant comfort. As the work of the Salvation Army and Dorothy Day shows, good Christian solutions to homelessness include treating the symptoms with the underlying causes of the issue. This includes supporting legislative measures addressing mental health treatment, economic disparity, and housing as well as policies (Snow & Anderson, 1993).

Within the framework of military leadership, these values may be used to foster a compassionate and service-oriented culture especially for veterans dealing with homelessness. Emphasizing the dignity and value of every person, supporting programs that assist homeless veterans, and pushing for institutional solutions to solve homelessness within military communities can help military leaders to model servant leadership (Burt, 2001).

**Conclusion**

Finally, the research in this paper shows how firmly ingrained in the Biblical theology the Judeo-Christian perspective on the homelessness problems remains. Significantly, it has changed as the Christian social theory and practice grow. From the early church's humanitarian activities to contemporary groups like the Catholic Worker, the Christian tradition has always underlined the inherent dignity of every person and the imperative of looking after those in need. These ideas remain relevant today and provide direction for contribution of religion and society to solve modern social problems like homelessness. These realizations provide military commanders with useful ideas for compassionate service and servant leadership. Inspired by the lengthy history of Christian involvement with social concerns and the continuing Biblical command to love and serve others, this study has strengthened my personal feeling of responsibility to be an agent of change in the world.

**References**

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